

Reaction to state report card results mixed

Some are confused, while others are frustrated, but most seem to agree that public perception of school quality does not align with report card results for the 2016-2017 school year.

Although Ohio's revamping of state report cards – including implementation of an A-F rating system – was intended to offer better insight into school performance, parents, educators and policy makers generally agree that schools are performing better than ratings suggest.

According to State Rep. Mike Duffey (R-Worthington), loud public outcry serves as justification for additional changes. He plans to introduce legislation to overhaul report cards to focus on providing data rather than ratings.

“Parents are by and large siding with their school districts over the state, which means the state report card does not have the public's trust,” Duffey said. “When it doesn't have the public's trust, it fails to have value as a tool for the state.”

Even those who agree with Duffey are concerned that further changes could be disruptive, following a period of significant change as Ohio has adopted and implemented new learning standards, assessments and report cards.

“I think we need to make sure that we're giving the data to the schools and districts so they understand what they need to do to improve ...” and the current approach doesn't always achieve that result, said House Education and Career Readiness Committee Chair Andy Brenner (R-Powell).

Brenner also points out that the new report card ratings could have a negative economic impact, discouraging companies from locating operations in Ohio due to a misperception that students here are not well-prepared.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Paolo DeMaria recommends that the importance of report card data remain at the forefront for policy makers eager to reframe the general public conversation regarding state report cards.

